

**Report of the
Accreditation Visiting Team**

**Piute High School
550 North 100 West
Junction, Utah 84740**

January 18, 2005



Utah State Office of Education
250 East 500 South
P.O. Box 144200
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200

**THE REPORT OF THE
VISITING TEAM REVIEWING**

**Piute High School
550 North 100 West
Junction, Utah 84740**

January 18, 2005

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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State Superintendent of Public Instruction**

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Salt Lake City, Utah

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FOREWORD

The major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate school growth and improvement so as to increase student achievement.

In these efforts, the school staff makes a comprehensive evaluation of the school's programs, operations, and results. The school determines how actual practices align to stated objectives and resulting outcomes. It is a three-phased evaluation: (1) self-evaluation, (2) on-site evaluation by an external team of educators, and (3) implementation using units of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The evaluation, January 18, 2005, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to increase student achievement.

The entire staff of Piute High School is commended for the time and effort devoted to studying and evaluating the various facets of the total program and to preparing the materials used by the visiting team. The excellent leadership given by Principals Scott Bagley and Kennedy Sylvester are also commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for their desire for excellence at Piute High School, and also for the professional attitude of all members of the group, which made it possible for them to see areas of weakness and strength and to suggest procedures for bringing about improvements.

While these recommendations may be used to solicit financial support to acquire some of the materials, equipment, and services needed to carry out a more effective program, it is even more important that the faculty and administration utilize them as they continue to evaluate and modify course offerings and administrative and classroom procedures to more dramatically increase student achievement at Piute High School.

Patti Harrington, Ed.D.
State Superintendent
of Public Instruction

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Twila B. Affleck

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1/3/2005

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| Terry Higgins | Director Buildings and Grounds |
| Craig and Tina Sudweeks | Supervisor Transportation and Maintenance |
| Liz Jessen | Supervisor School Lunch |

PIUTE HIGH SCHOOL
ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

School Administration

Kennedy Sylvester Principal
Scott Bagley Principal

Counseling

Scott Bagley Counselor
Betsy Cazier Assistant Counselor

Support Staff

| | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Elouise Coates, Secretary | Deann Heitman, Food Service |
| Shelia Jensen, Secretary | Heather Sudweeks, Library/Media |
| Terry Higgins, Head Custodian | Angela Crose, Library/Media |
| Beth Allen, Custodian | Mary Fullmer, Library/Media |
| Camille Gericke, Custodian | Sharon Allen, Instructional Aide |
| Fran Johnson, Food Service | Mandy Brindley, Instructional Aide |

Faculty

| | | |
|---------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Doug Allen | Georgi Dalton | Lawson Sweat |
| Sherida Allen | Corey Fullmer | Kennedy Sylvester |
| Scott Bagley | Steve Hoagland | Kendall Torgerson |
| Shauna Bagley | Ken Jensen | |
| Keri Bushman | Leslie Smith | |

PIUTE HIGH SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Piute High School, in partnership with our communities, is to provide a comprehensive, caring educational experience, which will do the following:

- Nurture the unique talents and self-worth of each individual
- Create a socially responsible, lifelong learner who respects self and others
- Develop confidence and capabilities to face the challenges of a rapidly changing world
- Promote a positive learning environment which values diversity and the preservation of community values
- As partners, we will provide sufficient resources and a talented, committed staff that create a safe environment where all individuals may flourish

BELIEF STATEMENTS

- We believe in the worth and dignity of each person.
- We believe that all students deserve the chance to maximize their talents and abilities.
- We believe that education is the cornerstone for a quality future and that it is a life-long process.
- We believe that modeling honesty, integrity, hard work, compassion, and service is the foundation of a successful school community.
- We believe that an effective education is a shared responsibility by all persons groups, and organizations within our community.
- We believe that students thrive in a learning environment that is safe, non-threatening, and that facilitates self-discovery, exploration, and intellectual risk-taking.
- We believe that an effective educational system anticipates, plans, and acts in response to a changing world.

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Dr. Roy L. Hoyt, Hurricane High School, Washington County School District,
Visiting Team Chairperson

Nyman Brooks, Tuachan High School, Utah Charter School

VISITING TEAM REPORT

PIUTE HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

In 1957 a movement was undertaken to consolidate the two Piute County high schools—one in Marysvale, with 94 students, and one in Circleville, with 154 students—into one centrally located facility. An assessment of the stability of the existing buildings indicated that they were crumbling dangerously and had to be replaced. An emotional battle followed, which eventually ended with a move by the Piute County Board of Education bonding taxpayers to finance new construction. This gave the green light to the district to build a new building, which was completed in 1962.

The present Piute High School claims bragging rights to a recently renovated track, modern gym, auditorium, and snack bar. The library has been remodeled, and now has a computer lab and EDNET classroom. The resource classroom was moved to accommodate a renovated weight room, which has been utilized by students and community members. Students attend grades seven through twelve, traveling by bus from several outlying communities: Marysvale, Junction, Circleville, Antimony, Angle, Greenwich, Koosharem, and Burrville.

Students at Piute High have numerous educational opportunities provided not only through the Utah State Core Curriculum, but also through concurrent enrollment offered over EDNET from Utah Valley State College and Utah State University. Vocational students are also active in courses offered through Snow College South in Richfield, receiving instruction in carpentry and auto mechanics. Several students are taking advantage of classes offered through the Electronic High School, providing them with a broader range of curriculum choices.

Extracurricular activities are important to a small school, and cannot be accomplished without the dedication and hard work of teachers, parents, students, and community members. At Piute High School extracurricular activities are plentiful, including Talent Search, Upward Bound, music, drama, athletics, drill team, FBLA, FCCLA, FFA, Sterling Scholars, and the National Honor Society.

a) *What significant findings were revealed by the school's analysis of its profile?*

It was clear from the data in the profile that the students, parents, and staff members have, for the most part, positive perceptions of the school. Students believe teachers and administrators are providing a safe environment as well as extra help outside the regular school day. However, the community opinion

inventory suggests that the goals of the school are not consistent with the local values held by the community.

End-of-level testing results were high enough to show adequate progress (AYP) for the federal and state requirements. The tenth grade students at Piute High School scored far above the state average on the UBSCT test last year.

- b) *What modifications to the school profile should the school consider for the future?*

It is critical that Piute High School consider other available data that would be helpful in identifying non-learners. CRT scores, Vocational Competency Test scores, attendance, and ACT scores should be disaggregated by gender, special education, ethnicity, and other factors that are specific to the school site. Disaggregated data is essential so that the school may be confident of its knowledge of who is learning and who is not learning.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

- Further data pertaining to the community perception of the school should be collected. Areas of concern that surfaced from the stakeholder analysis included the community perception of a safe learning environment and school discipline.
- Disaggregated data needs to be collected and analyzed by the entire school community. This ongoing process will inform the school community of what decisions to make to improve teaching and learning.
- Facilitate the identification of low-performing students through the use of standardized assessments, Criterion-Referenced Tests, and school-designed assessments.
- Collectively improve the school improvement plan, based on the needs identified by analysis of all data collected. Streamlining goals that specifically detail who is responsible, resources needed, when steps will take place, and how attainment of progress on action steps and goals will be determined should help the faculty stay focused.

CHAPTER 2: THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS

- a) *To what extent has the school community engaged in a collaborative self-study process on behalf of students?*

The Visiting Team found some evidence of the school community's involvement with the self-study. The school conducted a survey of parents, students, and teachers to determine the effectiveness of the school.

- b) *To what extent does the school's self-study accurately reflect the school's current strengths and limitations?*

The work done in departments shows an effort to identify areas of strength at Piute High School. Most members of the staff were involved in some aspect of the self-analysis. However, continued collaboration in the ongoing collection of student data and focus groups needs to be emphasized. It is recommended that Piute High School's self-study include the use of data to drive the decision-making process, to monitor progress toward the school DRSLs, and to guide the activities of departments, focus groups, and school leadership.

CHAPTER 3: INSTRUCTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Piute High School's desired results for student learning (DRSLs) are as follows:

1. Students will demonstrate basic foundation skills in essential subject areas and effective and appropriate use of technology.
2. Students will demonstrate thinking and reasoning skills in concrete and abstract ways while integrating knowledge and experience.
3. Students will learn and demonstrate communication skills expressing oral, artistic, written and nonverbal communication in a respectful manner.
4. Students will understand and promote the democratic principles of freedom, justice, and equality.
5. Students will recognize and demonstrate integrity and dependability and appropriate strategies to resolve conflicts while practicing a healthy lifestyle.
6. Students will evaluate and identify personal interests, abilities and qualities as they prepare for higher education and/or a career.

Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals:

Note: The school did not complete the focus group report. This analysis is based solely on the site visit.

- a) *To what extent did the school facilitate a collaborative process to build a shared vision for the school (mission) that defines a compelling purpose and direction for the school?*

The collaborative process at Piute High School seems to be less formal than that of larger schools and larger communities. As a result, the process for building consensus on the school's vision and mission seems more organic and spontaneous than that of larger communities.

- b) *To what extent has the school defined a set of beliefs that reflect the commitment of the administration and staff to support student achievement and success?*

The mission statement describes the purpose and direction for the school, and reflects a focus on student learning as the top priority for the school. However, not all stakeholders were included in the development and implementation of the mission and beliefs.

- c) *To what extent do the school's mission and beliefs align to support the school's desired results for student learning (DRSLs)?*

The school's mission, beliefs, and desired results for student learning align in purpose and intent.

Curriculum Development:

Note: The school did not complete the focus group reports. This analysis is based solely on the on-site visit.

- a) *To what extent does the staff work collaboratively to ensure the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards and the Utah Core Curriculum (with inclusion of the Utah Life Skills)?*

The curriculum is based on the Utah State Core. Teachers often collaborate within departments and across specific discipline lines.

- b) *To what extent does the teaching staff work collaboratively to support the development of a curriculum that focuses on the school's desired results for student learning?*

It is evident that the teaching staff is highly engaged in encouraging and building collaboration between teachers.

Quality Instructional Design:

Note: The school did not complete the focus group reports. This analysis is based solely on the on-site visit.

- a) *To what extent does the professional staff design and implement a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students?*

Effective classroom management and organizational strategies are used to maximize students' academic engaged time. The administration and staff have worked together to establish a positive academic learning environment.

- b) *To what extent does the professional staff employ a variety of instructional strategies to ensure the needs of different learners are met?*

The Visiting Team did not see a wide variety of teaching strategies; however, in individual interviews with teachers, most indicated they employed several different strategies to enhance student learning.

- c) *To what extent do the professional staff and leadership provide additional opportunities which support student learning?*

Students are provided with some opportunities to receive additional assistance to improve their learning. Teachers are available daily during extended hours before and after school. General education teachers also routinely coordinate with the special education teacher to meet individual student needs.

Quality Assessment Systems:

Note: The school did not complete the focus group report. This analysis is based solely on the site visit.

- a) *To what extent has the staff developed classroom or school-wide assessments based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement?*

The expectations for student achievement and performance standards are not fully developed. In those cases where the expectations of student learning are clearly defined, assessments of student learning are aligned with the essential knowledge, skills, and performance standards for students. The staff is encouraged to develop assessments to measure their DRSLs.

- b) *To what extent are assessments of student learning developed using methods that reflect the intended purpose and performance standards?*

There is evidence that the staff members use multiple assessments in their classes to evaluate student performance. Assessments observed by the Visiting Team included oral presentations, open-ended questions, group assignments, and group questions.

The Visiting Team suggests that each department develop common assessments at the end of each quarter to identify students' progress. Using these assessments will help the staff identify those students who are not learning and devise strategies to facilitate their growth.

- c) *To what extent are assessments designed, developed, and used in a fair and equitable manner?*

The Visiting Team was unable to determine this.

Leadership for School Improvement:

Note: The school did not complete the focus group report. This report is based solely on the site visit.

- a) *To what extent does the school leadership promote quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate and actively supporting teaching and learning?*

The school has established an academic learning climate in which teaching and learning are supported.

- b) *To what extent does the school leadership employ effective decision making that is data-driven, research-based, and collaborative?*

It is evident the data has been read and the research has been done. Teachers are encouraged to collaborate where possible, and indeed they are collaborating. There is always room for more collaboration, however, and the research needs to continue in order to make the programs more data-driven.

- c) *To what extent does the school leadership monitor progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness through a comprehensive assessment system and continuous reflection?*

The Visiting Team did not able to observe any systematic reflection or analysis of assessment data within the faculty or Community Council.

- d) *To what extent does the school leadership provide skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources of the school for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment?*

Most of the school-wide policies and operational procedures are consistent with the school's beliefs and mission and are designed to maximize opportunities for successful learning.

The co-principals are both very visible; they are available in their classrooms or office for students or teachers to voice their concerns.

- e) *To what extent does the school leadership make decisions related to the allocation and use of resources which align with the school goals, the achievement of the DRSs, and school improvement efforts?*

No information was presented on this subject.

- f) *To what extent does the school leadership empower the school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning?*

Positive and productive working relationships are established among students, teachers, support staff, and administrators at Piute High School. The school community has created a learning environment for students that nurtures a sense of caring and belonging.

The school leadership exemplifies the concept of a principal being the "principal teacher in a community of teachers" and the "principal learner in a community of learners." Discussions and decisions regarding student learning flow freely between management levels.

Community Building:

- a) *To what extent does the school foster community building and working relationships within the school?*

Piute High School is an extremely tight-knit school community. The term that faculty used most often in describing the nature of the community was "family." There seems to exist a deep commitment to building and maintaining close relationships within the school. The school administration, in particular, operates in an open and inclusive manner. Students also exhibit great kindness, acceptance, and understanding toward classmates who contend with personal challenges or idiosyncrasies.

- b) *To what extent does the school extend the school community through collaborative networks that support student learning?*

Piute High School has a smaller population than some of the larger high schools in the state. Moreover, the school system is the largest employer in the county. As

a result, many teachers' children attend the school where their parents work. These same parents often serve on the School Community Council. Outside of the school, adults and children interact with each other at church, in scouting, in athletics, and in other leisure activities. The bonds that bind the school community together are almost indistinguishable from those of the community at large. Therefore, it is difficult for a child to "fall through the cracks."

Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning:

- a) *To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through comprehensive and ongoing professional development programs focused on the school's goals for improvement?*

The school's organizational system and culture are supportive of school improvement and professional development. All teachers interviewed mentioned that they take extension courses offered through the State Office of Education, Utah State University, and other organizations.

- b) *To what extent does the school create conditions that support productive change and continuous improvement?*

The school sustains the commitment to continuous improvement and renewal. The Visiting Team recommends that the administration organize a school leadership team that would enhance the school's ability to sustain continual improvement over time.

CHAPTER 4: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED SCHOOLS (NAAS) STANDARDS I-XI

Standard I – Educational Program

This standard is met. Piute High School's instructional and organizational practices, as well as its policies and procedures, support the desired results for student learning and prepare students to succeed in a culturally diverse, democratic society.

Standard II – Student Personnel Services

This standard is met. Student personnel services are designed to give systematic assistance to students.

Standard III – School Plant and Equipment

This standard is met. The school plant provides for a variety of instructional activities and programs and incorporates aesthetic features that contribute to a positive educational atmosphere.

Standard IV – Library Media Program

This standard is met. The school library media program is a primary resource for literacy, information, and curriculum support.

Standard V – Records

This standard is met. Student records are maintained, handled, and protected in the best interests of students and parents. Students and parents have the right to access personal student records and are ensured the privacy of such, as guaranteed by federal legislation.

Standard VI – School Improvement (This is addressed in the self-study.)

This standard is met. The school improvement plan focuses on the total school rather than each of the separate components within the school.

Standard VII – Preparation of Personnel

This standard is met. All professional personnel are in compliance with the licensing requirements of the state of Utah and are properly endorsed for the subjects they are assigned.

Standard VIII – Administration

This standard is met. The administration of Piute High School provides educational leadership, supervises and coordinates programs, and carries out the necessary administrative procedures.

Standard IX – Teacher Load

This standard is met. The total number of students instructed by any one teacher in any one grading period does not exceed numbers set by the Utah State Office of Education and/or Northwest.

Standard X – Activities

This standard is met. Piute High School supports a range of activities that supplement the basic instructional program by providing additional interests and experiences for learning to take place.

Standard XI – Business Practices

This standard is met. The school is financially responsible. Proper budgetary procedures and generally accepted accounting principles are followed for all school funds. The school's advertising and promotional literature are completely truthful and ethical.

CHAPTER 5: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS – ACTION PLAN

- a) *To what extent is the school-wide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up?*

The action plan currently addresses several major areas of improvement, as identified by the school's departments. The action plan may need to be modified to accommodate the completion of the focus group component. These areas of improvement include the following:

- Increase the effectiveness of the Counseling Department, especially in the areas of financial aid and scholarship information.
- Create a forum to recognize student achievement, encourage patriotism, and increase school spirit.
- Implement the Six Traits of Writing across the curriculum.
- Improve basic math skills, communication skills, and problem solving skills through remediation and departmental projects and activities.
- Help students gain technological skills while performing maintenance functions that benefit the school population.

- b) *To what extent is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, school-wide and system-wide?*

The administration at Piute High School is very supportive of teacher participation in professional development activities. There is evidence that teachers share material, instructional activities and skills, and content knowledge with each other on a formal and informal basis.

- c) *How sound does the follow-up process that the school intends to use for monitoring the accomplishments of the school-wide action plan appear to be?*

All necessary components for evaluation are in place. The staff needs to more fully develop and refine the action plan. Some areas of the plan are vague.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- Piute High School has an informal culture of collaboration and cooperation.
- The administration should be complimented for fostering a culture of collaboration within the school.
- The students feel like they are embraced in a safe and nurturing environment. Teachers, students, and patrons describe the school as “family-like.”
- Extended learning opportunities for students are available, including EDNET, peer tutoring, extended after-school hours, etc.

Recommendations:

- Using the NSSE Rubrics, complete the focus group process. Broader involvement by the stakeholders (parents, teachers, and community members) in the focus groups is critical.
- The staff needs to more narrowly focus its action plan. Nonessential items can be eliminated, while additional components (Six Traits of Writing, research-based instructional strategies, etc.) can be postponed over the six-year cycle to allow for a more focused effort.
- A school leadership team needs to be organized so involvement may be extended to the various departments and community members.
- Indicators and assessments for desired results for student learning need to be developed. Although this process may take time, it will create buy-in and a sense of community among students and staff members in particular.